

# FOCAL POINT



Issued by the

MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : SEPTEMBER 1984 : -

## CALENDAR:

Mon., Sep. 24 - Board of Director's Meeting, 7:30 P.M. at the observatory.  
Fri., Sep. 28 - September Program-Meeting, 8 P.M. at the observatory.  
Wed., Oct. 3 - First Wednesday, 7:30 P.M. at the observatory.  
Saturdays - Observatory clean up-fix up.  
Saturday Nights - Members night at the observatory.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM-MEETING: The Milwaukee Astronomical Society has begun another new year. The 1983-'84 year will be recorded in Society history as one of its busiest owing to the ALCON '84 national convention, accelerated effort towards completion of the 26" telescope, and special work to clean up-fix up our New Berlin facilities.

Traditionally, the first MAS General Program-Meeting is held at UWM on the third Friday of September. However, the first meeting of the new year will take place

on the FOURTH Friday, September 28, 8 P.M.,  
at the Milwaukee Astronomical Society Observatory, located one mile west of Calhoun Road (KX) at 18850 W. Observatory Road, New Berlin.

There will be no featured speaker at this meeting. Weather permitting, members and their guests (only) may view through our 'scopes, including the 26".

FORGET YOUR DIET and enjoy yourself at the 16th Annual MAS Dinner-Program Meeting Friday, October 19.

This year we will enjoy excellent cuisine prepared and served by the Giles Leilani Restaurant at 18605 West Bluemound Rd., west of Brookfield Square in Brookfield. There is ample free parking.

Our main speaker will be Associate Professor Kenneth Nordsieck of UW-Madison, an academic astronaut to be on board the Columbia space shuttle scheduled to lift off March 6, 1986. Professor Nordsieck will be performing functions aboard the shuttle related to astronomy. His view of Comet Halley should be astounding!

Event times are:

6 P.M. - Cash Bar

7 P.M. - Dinner

8 P.M. - Short meeting followed by our main speaker.

There is no charge if you attend only the meeting. Please fill out the form on the last page and send it to Miss Korenic soon!

ALCON '84, the 38th National Convention of the Astronomical League, sponsored by the Milwaukee Astronomical Society, was a well-planned event attended by nearly 400 delegates from states near and far, including Hawaii. It was held August 1-4 at Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin. It was a joint meeting with three other National Societies.

Four invited speakers, twenty-seven papers, and eight workshops covered a wide range of astronomical topics of interest to many or all of the attendees. One must not take the meaning of the word amateur too lightly judging from the depth and delivery of many of the papers.

The Astromart was jammed most of the time, and not only with browsers. Many people were carrying purchases or ordering items.

One good-sized room was crowded with displays including unusual artwork, observation recordings, drawings, and a layout showing how the the REFLECTOR is published.

The tour to and of Yerkes Observatory at Williams Bay was one of the highlights of the convention. The 40" refractor never fails to leave viewers starry-eyed.

Planning and executing the many Convention tasks did not just happen. Chairman Dan Koehler worked diligently and tirelessly for fourteen months attending to every detail right to the very end of the event. And his 17-person committee must be highly commended for their faithful help and expertise in making this convention a memorable job of work.

#### GENERAL OBSERVATORY NEWS:

A number of members worked very hard to get the observatory ready for ALCON. The scopes are in best ever state of repair. All the buildings have been painted inside and out and the place has been cleaned throughout. The best way to thank these people is to keep everything in this shape.

After visiting our facilities last spring, Mr. Carl Newton, founder of the Southwest Washington (State) Ast. Society, wrote in his Society's newsletter tell a scoop "If any astronomical Society in the United States has a better set up than this one (ours)---tell me about it."

The driveway has been blacktopped. When opening the cable pull it off the blacktop, do not drive over or damage may result. The blacktop has yet to be sealed. Looking for volunteers.

Will anyone who has darkroom equipment please contact Brian Cieslak at 679-9663?

Rumors are that Ol' Man Winter will be vacationing in our area, so people are needed to start buttoning up the observatory and finish unfinished projects. Will you help? Call Gerry at 475-9418 or John at 258-5626.

A Halley comet observing program will be pursued by the MAS Observatory for '85 & '86. The comet will be mag. 16.7 on Jan. 1, 1985. We hope to locate the comet as soon as possible and observe until it fades beyond our scopes in '86. We intend to pursue photography, photometry, size measurement, and possible precise position. Anyone who would like to get involved, contact Brian Cieslak or G. Samolyk.

Any observer who has observations from Sept. '83 thru Aug. '84 to be included in this years observatory report, send them to: G. Samolyk, 931 S. 76th St., West Allis, Wi. 53214. Of particular interest are variable star totals, lunar and planetary occultations, planetary reports, comet observations, and any other creative observing projects you may be involved in.

26" TELESCOPE NEWS:

The new scope saw first light on July 29 and was a real pride at ALCON. The scope however is not yet operational since the scope, dome, and slit are not motorized. The building has yet to pass inspection. DO NOT USE without the director or assistant present until all work is finished. Some help to finish the dome and carpentry would help greatly.

DUES ARE PAYABLE starting in September. You can make Treasurer Jim Toeller's task easier by paying now!

Send your remittance made payable to Mr. James Toeller, 407 W. Mall Rd., Milw., Wis. 53217 (352-7144). A handy form with rates appears on the last page.

NEW MEMBERS: The Milwaukee Astronomical Society is pleased to add these new members to its roster: Thomas Berken and wife Nancy, Muskego; Myron Cruver, Milw., Anthony Di Frances and wife Beth Ellen, Milw., Carol Flanagan and son Sean, West Allis; Richard Hegy and wife Roberta, Milw.; William Lauer, Milw.; Barbara Swiontek, Milw.; Robert Van Den Berg, Milw.; Fred Wallner, West Allis; Gregory Zuchowski, Greendale.

All will be introduced at the September General-Meeting.

ONE CANNOT HELP BEING POETIC when staring at the stars. Please read and enjoy the following ode by Manuel Roldan, brother of Past President Frank Roldan.

HUMAN INTELLECT AND SPACE

In a milky-white space island  
There's a yellow star called Sol  
Nine planets, their moons, and boulders  
Turn around its fiery ball

And in this same solar system  
Is the world where I was born;  
Known as Terra, Earth, Blue Marble:  
The third planet from the sun

For ages I've searched the night sky  
Seeking to fathom the unknown  
What is the nature of those lights?  
What if the ancients were wrong?

Godesses, gods, heroes, monsters  
And all the legends of old  
Gave way to the flame of Science;  
Its torch's held high by the bold

Fighting against rigid dogma  
And ever striving to see,  
Defying blind superstition,  
Braving the powers that be

Many marvels I've created,  
That in the future I might  
Know and roam the cosmos freely  
Despite the barrier of light

And yet, I do have a transport  
Although the ships of today  
Are reined by engines and fuels  
That keep them close to their bay

But my craft needs not the thunder  
That dies in the vacuum'd space,  
Nor the ion streams that give some  
Their momentum in their blaze

It requires no mechanics  
For impulse, nor any kind  
Of atomic fusion power,  
For my space-ship is my mind

And in free thought, free to wander  
Past the red legend that's Mars,  
With it I'll cross Pluto's orbit,  
Outer space, and reach the stars

Manuel Roldan  
August, 1984

WHAT IS FIRST WEDNESDAY? The first Wednesday night of each month offers a special time at the observatory to learn instrument operation and observing techniques, to get acquainted with the many MAS observing programs, or to problem solve. The library is also available.

The next meeting will take place Wed., Oct. 3, at 7:30 P.M.

FOR SALE: 8" f/5 Newtonian tube assembly only. Special quality item made by Ken Wolf, Adler Planetarium optical supervisor. Contains Novak parts. Priced at \$300 with finder, \$250 without finder.

6" f/8 mirror also by Ken Wolf. Very fine quality. \$80. Please call Kieth Taylor after 4 P.M. at 764-6507 if interested in either or both the above items.

<u>METEOR SHOWER</u>	<u>PEAK DATE, TIME, AND RADIANT DIR.</u>	<u>MOON AGE</u>	<u>PEAK RATE/HR.</u>
Draconids	Tue., Oct. 9, 9 P.M.-NW	Full	10

Best viewing is between midnight and dawn. Peak rate may occur a day or two before or after maximum. On any normal night, an observer should see from 5 to 10 meteors per hour.

MEMBER'S NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

Sept. 15	G. Samolyk	475-9418	Oct. 6	H. Auchter	542-2158
22	P. Smitka	785-0926	13	J. Asztalos	258-5626
29	V. Tangney	327-7976	20	P. Borchardt	445-1181

Saturday night is member's night at the observatory. All members are invited to come out to observe, learn how to use the equipment available, or just chat. Call the keyholder the Fri. before his night - cancel Sat. if necessary. Keyholder should report anyway. He will also oversee tours during the week ending with his assigned night. Mr. J. Toeller (352-7144) will act on requests.

- : FULL HUNTER'S MOON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9 : -

DIRECTORY:

President - Peter Smitka - 785-0926  
 Vice President - Eileen Korenic - 541-3999  
 Program Chairwoman - Mrs. Virgil Tangney - 327-7976  
 Secretary - Brian Ganiere - 425-1384  
 Treasurer - James Toeller - 352-7144  
 Observatory Director - Gerry Samolyk - 475-9418  
 Asst. Obs. Director - John Asztalos - 258-5626  
 FOCAL POINT Editor - LeRoy Simandl - 933-3052  
 MAS Observatory - 18850 W. Observatory Rd., New Berlin - 542-9071

OCTOBER FOCAL POINT DEADLINE - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1984.

SEPTEMBER MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE SEPTEMBER 28, 1984